



## **Amherst Shelter**

At the First Baptist Church  
N. Pleasant Street Amherst, Ma.

January 5, 2011

### Amherst Shelter Program 2010/2011 Season to Date Summary

- Hours of operation:** Staff and volunteers are on site from 8:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m. 7 days per week. Guests can access the shelter from 9:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m. 7 days per week.
- Program Overview:** Guests access the shelter daily at 9:30 p.m. Dinner is served nightly by Safe Serve certified staff. From 9:30 - 11:00 guests can meet with shelter staff, case manager, and some outside service providers to help direct the guests to the services available to them. Lights are out at 11:00 p.m. in order to provide the guests with the opportunity for a full nights sleep. Lights are on at 7:00 a.m. and guests are served a light breakfast if desired. All guests must leave the shelter by 8:00 a.m. to allow for the First Baptist Church to begin its daily operations. Shelter supplies and guests' belongings are stored in 2 trailers in the church parking lot. Shelter staff sets up and tears down the shelter daily due to the churches need for the space.
- Staffing Patterns:** A minimum of 2 staff, as well as regularly scheduled volunteers are on hand during all shelter operating hours.
- Capacity:** State and local regulations limit the number of guests at the shelter to 16 people per night. Admittance is on a first come first serve basis, with some exceptions. (See attached "Capacity Policy")



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### **Client Data:**

Total number of guests served through 12/31/2010 – 43

Total bednights through 12/31/2010 – 638

Average number of guests per night – 13.6

Average length of stay – 15 nights

Average age of guests – 39 years old

Racial Breakdown - 79% White, 12 % Hispanic, 9 % African American

Income Status – 100 % of the shelter guests are below 30% of MFI. (See attached Income breakdown)

Gender Breakdown – 74% Male, 26% Female

Percentage of guests chronically homeless per HUD definition. (1 year straight or 4 episodes in 3 years) – 37%

Percentage of guests physically or mentally disabled – 51%

Percentage of guests with current substance abuse problem – 58%

Percentage of guests reporting some form of income – 54%

### **Successes:**

3 guests have been placed in long term residential programs in the Northampton and Springfield area, and 2 others have move into efficiency housing in the Florence section of Northampton.

### **Challenges and Concerns:**

Capacity is a growing concern, as the word of a shelter in Amherst spreads, and the weather gets colder, we are reaching capacity almost nightly. In the last 2 weeks we have had several over capacity situations. In most cases we have been able to find accommodations for the overflow at other shelters in Northampton, Springfield, and Westfield.